

predetermined period of time, and the predetermined period of time is specified by the first user.

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending. Claims 1-19 have been examined and rejected.

Item 1 rejects claims 1-7 and 9-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,946,386 to Rogers *et al.*, "Rogers" hereinafter.

Item 2 rejects claims 1 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,661,790 to Hsu, "Hsu" hereinafter.

Item 3 rejects claims 8 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Rogers in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,740,229 to Hanson *et al.*, "Hanson" hereinafter.

Item 4 responds to the arguments made in the last response. To advance prosecution, all rejections will be treated as though addressed to the claims as amended. Applicants traverse the rejections and request reconsideration.

Claim Amendments

Applicants have amended the independent claims to specify that the call back request and the call back are handled through a single server, and further that the call back attempt be handled automatically. Applicants' claims do not require prepayment of any call back. The amendments also specify a specialized system that differentiates a call back request from an ordinary message.

"Response to Arguments"

Applicants thank Examiner Bui for his considered examination of the Application, and for his considered remarks on clearer definition of the claims.

Applicants have amended the claims to specify that the call back request is sent to a server; that the server prompts the second user to select whether to call back the first user; and that, upon the second user's signaling call back acceptance to the server, the server automatically attempts to call the caller back. *Inter alia*, Applicants' system describes a single server handling the call back request and the

call back, and describes a dedicated call back function as opposed to a casual voice or written message. The call back need not be prepaid. This distinguishes over all art.

The Office Action notes that Rogers provides for a call back request only by voice message. As the Office Action states, "if [a calling party in Rogers] wants called party to call him back or return his call for example, he may just simply say: 'Hi, X, this [is] Y; please return my call ...' ". Office Action, page 6, lines 12-13. Rogers does not provide for a single server handling both the call back request and the call back; nor does Rogers describe a dedicated call back system.

Nor does Hsu or Hanson supply the limitations lacking in Rogers. Hsu provides a call back system designed to circumvent restrictions such as where it is prohibited to phone one country from another country. In the system described by Hsu, the initiating caller sends a call back request to a Service Switching Point (SSP), and the notified SSP initiates calls to the initiating caller and the destination caller. The initiating caller and destination are then connected. This teaches away from a system such as Applicants' where the server initiates a call from the destination caller to the initiating caller. Hsu discloses a prompt, but it is to the person originally initiating the communication, corresponding to Applicants' first user. It is not an inquiry into whether the person being contacted wants to accept the contact.

Hanson is cited as disclosing maintaining a connection between a first party and a second party for a predetermined period of time. Hanson discloses a system for allowing a caller to pre-pay for a return call when the intended recipient of a call is unavailable. Hanson discloses pre-paying for a given amount of time depending on the rates. Hanson does not disclose a non-prepaid option, in contrast to Applicants' system.

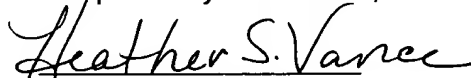
None of the cited art, singly or in combination, discloses the limitations of Applicants' claims. Accordingly, Applicants' claims are not anticipated by or obvious over the cited art.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that their invention as claimed is not disclosed, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Therefore, it is submitted that all pending claims are allowable over the art of record and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to allowance and issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather S. Vance".

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Marked-Up Version of the Claims

1. (Thrice Amended) A method for providing an automated call connection system comprising the steps of:

[initiating a call back request from a first user to a second user;]

a first user contacting a call server;

5 the first user requesting the server to deliver a call back request to a second user;

the server sending the call back request [from the first user] to the second user;

[receiving the call back request;]

10 the server prompting the second user whether to call the first user back;

the second user [choosing between] optionally signaling acceptance [and rejection] of the call back request to the server; and

15 if the second user [chooses] signals to accept the call back request, the server [immediately and] automatically attempting to connect the first user and the second user.

2. (Twice Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of: the server using a separate packet-based network to determine if the second user is ready to accept the call back request.

3. (Twice Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, further comprising the step of: the server bypassing call toll charges by using a packet-based network for the sending of call back requests.

4. (Once Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, [further comprising the step of: utilizing a computer for

the sending of the call back requests to a server collecting the call back requests] in which the server initiates a call from a device of the second user to a device of the first user.

5. (Once Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, wherein the first user's request for a call back [requests are automatically] is sent via at least one of an E-mail message, a pager and a facsimile.

6. (Once Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, wherein the [call back requests are] prompt is provided to the second user on a telephone display.

7. (Once Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, wherein the first user uses [call back requests are delivered to] a voice mail system to request the call back.

10. (Once Amended) The method of providing an automated call connection system as defined in claim 1, wherein a personal digital assistant is used [to initiate the call back request] by the first user to request the call back.

11. (Thrice Amended) A system for providing an automated call connection comprising:

a first user input device for initiating and sending a call back request;

a second user output device for receiving the call back [requests] request;

5 [a network connection for providing communication between the first user input device and the second user output device such that the callback request is automatically transferred between a first user and a second user, the second user choosing between acceptance and rejection of the call back request; and

wherein if the second user chooses to accept the call back request, a direct
10 call is automatically and immediately placed from the second user to the first user]
and
a server for transferring the call back request from the first user output device
to the second user output device and for prompting the second user whether to call
back the first user, and, if the second user signals to the network connection to
15 return the call, for automatically attempting to connect the first user and the second
user.

12. (Twice Amended) The system for providing an automated [all] call
connection as defined in claim 11, wherein the [network connection includes] server
connects to a separate packet-based network, the [second] separate packet-based
network determining if the second user is ready to accept the call back request.

16. (Twice Amended) The system for providing an automated call connection
as defined in claim 11, wherein the first user's call back [requests are automatically]
request is sent via at least one of an E-mail message, a pager and a facsimile
device.

17. CANCELED

18. (Once Amended) The system for providing an automated call connection
as defined in claim 11, wherein the first user uses [call back requests are delivered
to] a voice mail system to request the call back.